

CANDID AND IMPARTIAL  
CONSIDERATIONS  
On the NATURE of the  
SUGAR TRADE;  
THE  
COMPARATIVE IMPORTANCE  
OF THE  
BRITISH and FRENCH ISLANDS  
IN THE  
WEST-INDIES:

WITH  
The VALUE and CONSEQUENCE of  
ST. LUCIA and GRANADA, truly stated.

Illustrated with COPPER-PLATES.

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L O N D O N :

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as in truth all the errors into which we have ever fallen, in this respect, has been owing to no other cause than that of supposing, in consequence of some plausible pretences, that there might be a difference between the interests of this nation in those colonies, and the interests of our countrymen settled in those colonies, which can really never happen ; so that in consequence of our being deceived by such appearances, the wrong measures into which we have been so deceived, have been always equally dangerous, and in some instances fatal to both.

The inhabitants of those of our *American* islands, which from their principal commodity, or rather manufacture, are denominated the *sugar colonies*, are composed of *Whites* and *Blacks*, or in other words of *British* subjects and *African* slaves. It is from the skill and industry of the former, supported by the painful and indefatigable labour of the latter, that not sugar only, but various other commodities also to an immense value, are raised in those countries, and exported to different parts of the world. It is to the cheapness of the labour of these poor people, who likewise procure from thence the greatest part of their own subsistence, that those costly and extensive works, which are necessary in a sugar plantation, are derived, as well as all the other necessities that it requires, and whatever else contributes to the support, convenience, and the affluence of our countrymen in these isles, who are their masters ; and indeed,

deed, it is to this circumstance of the cheapness of their labour, that the sugar trade with regard to *Europe* at least, is in a great measure confined to *America*, as on the other hand, its being confined to *America*, is the principal cause of its affording such a variety of advantages, and more especially of its contributing so highly to the support of navigation, and in consequence of that to the maintainance of naval power ; from these general outlines of the importance of our sugar colonies, we will, for the sake of perspicuity, enter a little more minutely into the branches of their commerce with *Great Britain*.

These so necessary *Negro* slaves are purchased in *Africa* by the *English* merchants with a great variety of woollen goods ; a cheap sort of fire arms from *Birmingham*, *Sheffield*, and other places, powder, bullets, iron bars, copper bars, brass pans, *British* malt spirits, tallow, tobacco-pipes, *Manchester* goods, glass beads ; some particular kinds of linens, ironmonger and cutlery ware, certain toys, some *East India* goods, but in the main, with very little that is not of our own growth or manufacture. Besides these slaves, which make up the greatest part of their cargo, our *African* traders also purchase gold, elephants teeth, and dying woods, with some valuable drugs ; and in the *West Indies* also, when they have any surplus of slaves, they dispose of them at a very high price to foreign nations, by which there has been formerly very

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large sums got, and all returned to *Great Britain*. When these *Negroes* are sold to the *British* planters, they cannot be employed in or furnished with instruments proper for their daily labour, but with fresh advantage to the *British* nation.

For in his field work the planter must supply his *Negroes* with bills, hoes, axes, iron chains, and other necessary tools, which in consequence of their being continually used, makes it necessary to have yearly supplies for the making good *wear and tear*, which in that moist and sultry climate especially, rises to a very considerable amount. To this we may add, that these poor people living very hard, and selling no small part of the provisions they raise, lay out constantly the little product that thus arises out of their industry, which they are allowed to retain, with such as are stiled *Negro* traders, chiefly for *Birmingham*, *Sheffield*, and *Manchester* wares, so that all this, which, their number considered, amounts to no despicable sum, is likewise returned hither, which is the rather mentioned to shew, that if any means should be devised to render their condition more tolerable, and their circumstances more easy, the fruits of their own labour, as well as that employed in their master's service, would all necessarily center in this island.

But the field expences are trifling, in comparison of the utensils necessary in the sugar works, such as coppers, mill cases, ladles, skimmers, mills,

stills, and almost numberless other articles, to which may be added nails, locks, hinges, bolts, and lead, employed by the planter in his other buildings, and the almost innumerable kinds of iron work that are used in waggons, carts, mill works, and other things not only exceedingly expensive at the first setting out, but which from their being in continual use, constantly wear out and require fresh supplies. All these, at whatever price, must be had from *Britain*, and even the lumber, that is timber, cattle, &c. though it comes from the northern plantations, is paid for by sugar planters, and goes in discharge of the *balances* respectively due from those colonies to *Britain*; or at least a very great part of them, are this way discharged.

To these we must add, most of the materials necessary for building their houses, by far the greatest part of their furniture; and it is not only by their industry and the success attending it, that *Britain* is enriched, but also by their luxuries, whenever they are in a condition to have more than the conveniences of life, such as coaches, chariots, chaises, together with all sorts of wearing apparel, and no small part even of their provisions, such as cheese, bacon, pickles, beer, ale, and cyder in vast quantities, and flour and biscuit when they are cheap. Their *Negroes* also, are in this respect very beneficial, for slight as their cloathing is, they



they consume vast quantities of check linnen, striped hollands, fustian, blankets for their bedding, long ells and bays for warm cloathing, coarse hats, woollen caps, cotton and silk handkerchiefs, knives, razors, buckles, buttons, tobacco pipes, fishing tackle, small glasse, thread, needles, pins, and innumerable other articles, all of *British* growth or manufacture. As the demand for all these is limited only by the means of acquiring them, it is from thence self-evident, that in proportion as these colonies thrive, the supplies from *Britain* continually augment, so that whatever would contribute to increase the prosperity of either white or black inhabitants in these islands, would at the same time necessarily extend and enlarge the *British* commerce.

But we must not forget, that as sugar, rum, and molasses, so likewise cotton, indigo, pimento, mahogany, fustic, and, in a word every thing that comes from these plantations are bulky commodities; they require and employ an immense quantity of shipping, the freights of which outward and homeward-bound, insurance, commissions, and petit charges, are all paid by the inhabitants of these islands, and are all received by *British* merchants and factors, and in respect to these also, as much as they can be more extended the greater will the benefit be that *British* subjects must acquire from them, in consequence of that wise law, by which all that arises from the produce of these *British* colonies,

colonies, is effectually secured to *Britain*. We must also take into this account the very large revenue which annually arises from this commerce to the crown, and which if that commerce can be any ways enlarged, will also reap from thence a continual augmentation.

If upon the whole we attentively consider, that industry only ought to be accounted the real wealth of a nation, and that it is not either the fertility of soil, the excellence of climate, or even the number of people, if those people are not usefully employed, that can give strength to a state, or bestow peace and independence upon individuals, upon which however their happiness must always depend: If we revolve in our minds, what an amazing variety of trades receive their daily support, as many of them did originally their being, from the calls of the *African* and *West India* markets: If we reflect on the numerous families of those mechanics and artisans which are thus maintained, and contemplate that ease and plenty, which is the constant as well as just reward of their incessant labours: If we combine with these, those several tribes of active and busy people, who are continually engaged in the building, repairing, rigging, victualling, and equipping, the multitudes of seamen who earn their wages by navigating, and the prodigious crowds who likewise obtain their bread, by loading, unloading, and other necessary attendances upon ships: If we remember, that the subsistence  
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of all these ranks and degrees of men, thus usefully employed, constitutes a new fund of support to the landed and trading interests of this country, that their various consumptions contribute to raise the value of land, to cause a regular and constant demand for immense quantities of our native commodities, as well as to procure a vent for our numberless manufactures, and that all this is equally regular, permanent, and certain; we may from thence form a competent idea of the prodigious value of our *sugar colonies*, and a just conception of their immense importance to the grandeur and prosperity of this their mother country, to whom from the circumstance of this relation, they pay without repining such prodigious tributes.

The usual method of treating such subjects as these, in order to place them in the strongest and most striking light, has been to reduce the profits of the particular branch of commerce considered under some degree of calculation, in which however as there is necessarily some part, and too often a great deal of supposition, and many things asserted the truth of which (though really so) it might be very difficult, if not impossible to prove; men of critical judgments, very frequently disregard them. Yet it is hoped, that all circumstances considered, what follows with respect to the island of *Barbadoes*, the oldest of our present *West India* sugar colonies, will be allowed to be rather much below,

low, than any thing beyond the truth. Let us then exclude all that accrued from it to the people of *England* before the restoration, and estimate its produce from one thousand six hundred sixty, to seventeen hundred and sixty, at sixteen thousand hogheads of sugar, which make twelve thousand ton annually, and omitting entirely the rum or spirits, molasses, cotton, ginger, aloes, and all the other commodities of the island, estimating this at twenty pounds a ton, it will amount to two hundred and forty thousand pounds *per annum*, or twenty-four million sterling, in the course of the century either gained or saved to this nation, which, considering that *Barbadoes* is not bigger than the *Isle of Wight*, must appear a most amazing sum; and yet in proof of the modesty of this computation, it would be easy to name a very intelligent author, who before the close of the last century, affirmed that no less than thirty millions had been gained by our possession of *Barbadoes* at the time he wrote. But though his zeal might possibly carry him a little too far then, there is not now the least room to question, that the very best judges, by which is to be understood those who are best versed in these kind of things, and who also best understand this trade, would more readily concur in fixing the amount of our profits, during the period before assigned, at thirty than at twenty-four millions.

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